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Title:
Speech at the opening of Ayers House

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SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF AYERS HOUSE BY THE PREMIER,

DON DUNSTAN.

30/6/73.

MY LORD MAYOR,
MR. BONYTHON,
MINISTERIAL AND PARLIAMENTARY COLLEAGUES,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

WE ARE HERE THIS AFTERNOON TO MARK THE OPENING OF THE NEWLY RESTORED AYERS HOUSE. AND WHILE, IN A SENSE, IT IS AN OCCASION OF CELEBRATION, IT IS ALSO ONE OF SOME SERIOUSNESS.

AYERS HOUSE HAS BEEN RESTORED BECAUSE IT IS, IN ITS OWN RIGHT, A SPLENDID EXAMPLE OF EARLY SOUTH AUSTRALIAN RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE.

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IT IS A BUILDING OF GRACEFUL PROPORTIONS AND INTERNAL ELEGANCE.

AND IT HAS, IN ITS TIME, BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH THE GOVERNMENT.

SIR HENRY AYERS WAS FIVE TIMES PREMIER BETWEEN 1863 & 1873 AND DURING THAT TIME CABINET MEETINGS WERE REGULARLY HELD IN THE WESTERN WING DINING ROOM.

BUT IT IS LESS THE HISTORIC AND MORE THE ARCHITECTURAL VALUE OF THE HOUSE THAT WE HONOUR TODAY. AND WE DO SO, FIRSTLY, BECAUSE IT IS A CIVILIZED THING TO DO.

A CIVILIZED COMMUNITY IS ONE WHICH VALUES BOTH THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PAST AND OF THE PRESENT, AND IN RELATION TO ARCHITECTURE THIS MEANS DISCOVERING FROM THE PAST VALUES WHICH CAN EFFECTIVELY BE INCORPORATED IN MODERN PLANNING AND DESIGNING.

OVER THE PAST EIGHT YEARS OR SO A NUMBER OF DECISIONS HAVE BEEN TAKEN IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA THAT INDICATE SUCH A CONCEPT HAS A GROWING HOLD IN THIS COMMUNITY.

THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT IN A BROAD SENSE EXPRESSES THIS.

SO DOES THE POLICY OF THE CITY OF ADELAIDE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE, WHICH AIMS AT PROTECTING AND RESTORING THE ADELAIDE URBAN LANDSCAPE.

EDMUND WRIGHT HOUSE WAS SAVED FROM DEMOLITION BECAUSE SUCH VALUES WERE EXPRESSED AND RESPECTED. AND THE WORK OF THE NATIONAL TRUST AND SIMILAR CONSERVATION BODIES HAS OVER THE PAST DECADE OR SO EDUCATED, IN A REAL SENSE, BOTH THE PUBLIC, AND ITS GOVERNMENTS, IN A PROPER RESPECT FOR ARCHITECTURAL STANDARDS AND ACHIEVEMENT.

I THINK I CAN SAY IN THIS THAT MY GOVERNMENT, UNLIKE SOME OTHERS IN AUSTRALIA, IS SOMEWHAT ENLIGHTENED IN THESE MATTERS.

I BELIEVE WE WILL CONTINUE TO BE SO. I AM ALSO PLEASED TO SAY THAT IN BOTH EDMUND WRIGHT HOUSE AND AYERS HOUSE, WE HAVE ACHIEVED AN IDEAL BALANCE BETWEEN RESTORATION AND FUNCTION.

EDMUND WRIGHT HOUSE HAS BEEN SAVED AND GIVEN A USEFUL FUNCTION. IT IS IN NO SENSE A MUSEUM.

NEITHER WILL AYERS HOUSE BE ONE. THE INCLUSION OF RESTAURANTS IN THE RESTORATION PROGRAMME, THE PROVISION OF OFFICE SPACE FOR THE NATIONAL TRUST, AND THE POLICY OF GIVING THE TWO RECEPTION ROOMS OVER TO PROPER AND APPROPRIATE PUBLIC FUNCTIONS, WILL MEAN THAT THE HOUSE WILL HAVE A LIFE OF ITS OWN.

A PRIVATE CHAMBER MUSIC CONCERT IS TO BE HELD IN THE BALL ROOM TOMORROW NIGHT.

I EXPECT THE FESTIVAL OF ARTS WRITERS' WEEK WILL HAVE ITS HEADQUARTERS AT AYERS HOUSE.

THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO ENTERTAIN HERE.

IN ALL THESE THINGS, AND IN OTHERS, WE WILL HAVE IN AYERS HOUSE A STATE RECEPTION CENTRE OF DISTINCTION AND HIGH VALUE, BUT ONE TO WHICH THE PUBLIC WILL HAVE CONTINUING ACCESS.

IN CONCLUSION, MAY I IN THIS PAY TRIBUTE TO THE MANY PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THIS PROJECT.

I WOULD LIKE TO MENTION ^{THE} / SPLENDID WORK AND CO-OPERATION RECEIVED FROM THE NATIONAL TRUST AND ITS VARIOUS COMMITTEES.

IN PARTICULAR, I WOULD LIKE TO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE ARCHITECT, IAN HANNAFORD, AND HIS PARTNERS AND STAFF, IN THEIR SENSITIVE AND IMAGINATIVE PLANNING, AND TO ALL THE TRADESMEN AND SKILLED CRAFTSMEN WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED SO MUCH TO ACHIEVING SUCH A HIGH STANDARD OF RESTORATION.

IT NOW GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO DECLARE THE BUILDING RE-OPENED OFFICIALLY.

THANK YOU.

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